

**CITY OF SUNNYVALE**  
**PARKS DIVISION**  
730-7506

**INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN**

**Golf Course Maintenance and Noise**

While most neighbors appreciate the property and aesthetic values associated with having a golf course for a neighbor, many don't see the City's need to operate equipment in early morning hours. Additionally, recent changes in City Ordinances regarding noise have folks wondering whether the City violates its own rules.

First things first. City staff is not included in the Noise Ordinance regulations so that they can perform tasks early in preparation of public facilities for public use. So, crews at work on the course do not violate the ordinance. This being said though, there is much that the crew does to limit noise and to be good neighbors. In years past the equipment started at 5:00am. Tractors were fired up, and the course came to life very early. As more homes, apartment units and townhomes began to surround the course, maintenance operations were delayed until 6:00am, and currently only the more silent tasks of greens cup-cutting and restroom maintenance are performed before 6:30am on weekdays and 7:00am on weekends/holidays.

To some neighbors this may not seem much of a delay. However, with each half-hour delay, more golfers enter the course increasing the possibilities of maintenance staff being struck by golf balls. Golfers also express concern when staff are working in or near their target for golf shots. Staff has observed that when we begin operating mowers at 6:30 to 7:00am the risk of injury from golf balls is manageable. Beyond these start times the risks increase to uncomfortable levels. So, we have pursued additional means to complete tasks and help be good neighbors.

Recently, the City took delivery of a new electric powered greens mower. This mower is incredibly quiet, cannot be heard from over fifty feet and can be used at any time without annoying noise. We are committed to purchasing similar large electric-powered equipment, as it becomes available. Additionally, staff attempts to use products and hand tools wherever practical to eliminate the need for powered equipment such as blowers and string trimmers. Neighbors will still hear these tools, but hopefully, with decreasing frequency in the years to come.

We know that this operating schedule attempts to strike a balance between preparation of public facilities and elimination of all noise. And, some neighbors, due to alternative work schedules find noise a concern much later in the day. For example, we have had requests to operate equipment only in the afternoon and evening hours. We believe that we have reached a reasonable compromise that provides a measure of safety for staff, enjoyment for the public, and we are committed to finding additional ways to eliminate unnecessary noise. The Golf Operations Supervisor is available to discuss noise concerns and any golf related matter at 730-7625.

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